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Breaking News

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Airline aid supported by Honda, Lofgren

Andrew Hamm

The idea of the federal government aiding airlines facing financial ruin because of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks got support today by U.S. Reps. Mike Honda and Zoe Lofgren.

While stopping short of picking a number, the San Jose Democrats say some financial help is needed, whether it be U.S. grants, loans or some other form of assistance.

"They're going to need a helping hand," Mr. Honda said, speaking to reporters at San Jose International Airport this afternoon.

The U.S. Air Transport Association has asked for \$25 billion in government aid to stabilize industry finances. Mr. Honda says members of Congress have been talking about a \$15 billion aid package. The House Committee on Transportation, of which Mr. Honda is a member, is scheduled to hold a hearing on the airline relief package on Wednesday, Sept. 19.

Several airlines have announced massive budget cuts and employee layoffs. One, Midway Airlines, has temporarily ceased operations.

"The financial health of the airline industry affects the financial health of the nation's airports, including San Jose International," says San Jose International Airport Director of Aviation Ralph Tonseth.

Mr. Honda toured the airport today to view new security procedures firsthand and to speak with passengers about their concerns. In Congress, Mr. Honda has proposed federalizing the security screeners at U.S. airports and supports U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta's move to place U.S. Marshals on flights.



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